

# THE LADIES CHOICE.

Answer to the *Pleasures* of a Single  
L I F E.

27.



S I R S,

**W**HEN I daily observe the many Virulent Tongues and Pens employ'd without Cause to Asperse and Redicule our Sex, and Murder our Reputation unresisted, I thought it high Time to bestir my self in our own Defence.

Indeed I must Confess, when Women degenerate, they become worse than Men, the Reason is plain, *Corruptio optimu est pessima*, the sweet Wine turns the tarest Vinegar, the Ripest Apple is soonest Rotten; besides we are naturally enclined to regard the spots in the Moon, while we despise things under our Feet, all Imperfections and Vices in Men are slighted and coniv'd at because usual and common, *Communis error facit Jus*. But Miscarriages in Women are talk'd of and admired, like total Eclipses of the Sun at Noon Day, because rare and uncommon; but as a fair Face may have a Mole, and the brightest Sun shine may be overcasted, and a Devilish *Judas* intrude among the Holy Apostles? So there may be some of our Sex unworthy the Name of Reverence due to a Woman; but as some Exceptions rather make than marr a Rule, so 'tis the greatest Injustice in the World to charge the Infirmities and Follies of a few, on the whole; this being like the malicious Wasps and Flies, who fix on a Lazers Sores, and neglect the soundest Parts.

# Melissa to Belinda.

P RIThee, *Belinda* (for thou know'st I'm young  
 Unskill'd in Arts that to our Sex belong)  
 Thy wiser Counsels to my Youth impart,  
 Teach me at once to *Love*, and *Guard* my Heart:  
 That I have *Wit*, can *Sing* and *Dance* you know,  
 And the Men tell me I am Pretty too;  
 I now have Fifteen pleasing Summers seen,  
 And have been Courted by twice Fifteen Men;  
 Still fresh Pretenders do my Peace Invade,  
 They *Write*, they *Visit*, *Sigh* and *Serenade*,  
 And try always to catch a Harmless Maid.  
 Then since our Virgin Thoughts are apt to  
 And few escape that Noble Passion *Love*, (Rove  
 Teach me, *Belinda*, by thy Arts to Chuse  
 What Suiters to Admit, and which Refuse.

## *Belinda to Melissa.*

*Melissa*, I'm Rejoyc'd you're so Discreet,  
 For, that to more Experience you'll submit,  
 Argues your want of *Vanity*, not *Wit*.

And yet, my Dear, 'tis difficult t' Advise,  
*Fools* are so Plenty, and so Scarce the *Wise* :  
 To judge of Men, we shou'd not trust our Eyes,  
 Outward Appearance may Deludethe Sight ;  
 Nor is it good to gaze too near the Light :  
 For tho' your *Beauty*, like a Painted Scene,  
 May Dang'rous prove to the vile Race of Men,  
 Who at the greater distance do Admire,  
 And shun the heat of Love's Important Fire.

Whose *Little Good*, like lesser Thieves, unseen,  
 Steals to our Hearts, we scarce know how or when,  
 His *Standard* hoists and Guards the Fort within,  
 Then like a Tyrant does our Peace Controul,  
 And absolutely Lords it o'er the Soul :  
 Thus, with your *Heart*, your *Fortune* he'll dispose  
 He does the *Man*, you but the *Husband* chuse.  
 And tho' a *Fool*, you must the *Wretch* receive ;  
 For where we *Love*, we soon our Persons give.

Therefore *Melissa*, wisely Guard your Heart ;  
 What *Nature* won't defend, defend by *Art* :

Shun I advise you, most Devoutly shun,  
 Those *Servile Apes* that swarm about the Town  
*Pert, Noisie Coxcombs, Self-admiring Beaux,*  
 Known by their want of Wit, and Gaudy Cloaths :



Of all the Creatures Nature does provide,  
 To stock the World from *Ignorance* to *Pride*;  
 Of all that from her various Bosom spring,  
 A *Beau* I think the oddest kind of thing;  
 A selfish Compound, singular, and Vain,  
 Half *Ass*, half *Puppet*, and the least of *Man*;  
 One that seems just for Nature's Pastime made,  
 A *Garwy* Carcass, with an *Empty Head*;  
 Whose only *Knowledge* lies in *Modish Dress*,  
 And seldom looks much further than his *Glass*.  
 A Creature only Govern'd by his Will,  
 And never *Reads* above a *Taylor's Bill*;  
 A Wretch extreemly *Whimsical* and *Proud*,  
 Stiff in *Opinion*, *Talkative* and *Loud*;  
 And that which Compleatly Arms the *Fool*,  
 That the *Fop's* Emphatically dull.  
 That such, *Melissè*, may Address, 'tis true,  
 Write a soft *Song*, or senseless *Billetdoux*;  
 But 'tis *Themselves* they *Admire* in't, not *You*:  
 And she that's basely Yok'd with one of these,  
 Must e'en be Wedded to his *Vanities*;  
 Port on a *Thing* that scarce deserves a *Name*,  
 While he with *Slights* rewards her *Vertuous flame*  
 Or tell me, can he less *Indifferent* prove,  
 Who

Who thinks no Woman can Deserve his Love?  
 No, no, *Melissa*, never think he can;  
 For if you do, you're Cozen'd in your Man.

Self-Affection sways his little Sense;  
 Nought but *Himself* he Loves, and *Ignorance*.  
 By fatal Chance, if such a Man you Wed,  
 Better, *Melissa*, thou had'st Dy'd a Maid:  
 Ev'n such a Lover, were a Plague too great;  
 From such a Husband, Guard me, Oh my Fate!

Shun too, my Dear, the *Lewder Wits* o'th' Town  
 As watchfully as they'd avoid a Dun.

For such a Man too soon wou'd let you see,  
*Lewdness* and *Marriage* do but ill agree.  
 Oft at the Theatre such Sparks I've seen,  
 With *Rakish Looks*, half *Drunk*, come reeling in,  
 Tossing their *Wigs*, their *Backs* against the Scene,  
 Regardless of the Play (a Mark of Wit)  
 Bow to some Lewd Companion in the Pit.  
 Take Snuff, fling round, in the Side-Box be seen  
 Whisper a Mask, and then Retire again,  
 To some lov'd *Tavern*, where's their chief delight,  
 There in Debaucheries they spend the Night,  
 Then Stagger homeward by the Morning Light.  
 Thus the Extravagant squanders his Estate,

Scarc

Scarce e'er Consid'ring till it be too late :  
 And then a *Wife* must Cure the dang'rous Sore,  
 A *Fortune* too, his *Acres* must Restore ;  
 The Woman Found, is by Addresses won ;  
 They're *Married* : He's *profuse*, and she's *undone*.  
 The Wound once heal'd, he soon forgets the pain  
 And takes the Trade of *Lewdness* up again :  
 In Vicious Days and Nights his Life is spent ;  
 The *Pleasure* his, but her's the *Punishment*,  
 For now the Heav'n she Dreamt of, proves her Hell,  
 Whose only *Fault* was Loving him too well.  
 Pensive all Day she sits, all Night alone ; (moan  
 She does her slighted Love, but more his loss be-  
 By kind Endearments Fraught with Innocence,  
 She strives to soften his Impertinence ;  
 Fain wou'd she turn him from the winding maze,  
 Win him to Love, and be the same he was ;  
 But Vain her Sighs ; her Prayers, her Tears are  
 She might as soon her *Freedom* re-obtain, (vain  
 As think to Mollifie the obdurate Man.  
 Who like her Person, flights the fond advice,  
 And when with Love she wou'd his Soul entice  
 Flies from her Arms, & Revels in his Vice ;  
 Till she, alas, foreseeing what must come,  
 Consents,

Consents, and with the little left he packs her  
 Of such I give thee Caution to beware, (home,  
 Fly 'em, *Melissa*, like a Tim'rous Hare,  
 That strains along the vales t' avoid th' Hunters

And from a Soldier too, thy flight direct, (Snare.  
 In his Rough Arms, what can a Maid expect;  
 Long Absent Days, and tedious Widow'd Nights:  
 Are those the Marriage Joys, the vast Delights,  
 We promise to our selves, with him we Love?  
 Or shall we else such Constant Creatures prove,  
 To leave our Country, and turn Fugitive:  
 Follow the Camp, and with the Wanderer Live.  
 'Mongst War-like sound our softer hours to pass,  
 Scorch in the Sun, and Sleep upon the Grass:  
 No, no, *Melissa*, 'tis an Anxious Life;  
 Honour's his Mistress; let it be his Wife.

No Man of Bus'ness let thy Heart approve;  
 Bus'ness is oft an Enemy to Love:  
 Nor think, my Dear, thou canst be truly blest,  
 With one that's *Wedded* to his Interest.  
 Worldly Affairs does his Affections cloy,  
*As that which should preserve it, does destroy.*

'Twixt two Extreams you wretchedly must live  
 Or bad, or worse, as his Affairs do thrive;

Whose



Whose good or ill Success, must be the Rule,  
One makes him Insolent, and t'other Dull.

Let no Aspiring Courtier be thy Choice;  
Avoid in Courts, the Bustle and the Noise;  
Where Vain *Ambition* hurries on the Mind,  
And always leaves more solid Joys behind:  
And when the *Tristy Clown*, securely Blest,  
His *Barns* with *Plenty*, with *Content* his *Breast*,  
Possess'd with hopes of a long lost Estate,  
In haste forsakes his humble harmless Seat.

With Baggs and Bundle, Trots it up to Town,  
There wildly Gapes, and wanders up and down,  
And's kept in *Ignorance* till he's undone.  
Some weighty Sums receiv'd for *Corn* and *Cheese*,  
Are *Spent* in *Treats*, and *Giv'n* away in *Fees*.  
Mean while the *Lawyer* so well Acts his part,  
With empty Pockets, and an Aking Heart,  
He sends him home again to *Plow* and *Cart*.

So the *Gay Youth* does Lavish his Estate,  
And bribes into the Favour of the *Great*;  
Prefer'd he sits like Fortunes Darling Son,  
To's Friends, and what he was, a Stranger grown  
Till soon some turn of a Revolving State,  
Leaves him to Curse *Ambition*, and his Fate;  
Threaten'd

Threaten'd with Wants, perhaps the Youngster  
 And Lives (or rather Starves Genteely ) by his  
 (Writes Wits.

Therefore *Melissa*, Guard thee from surprize,  
 Let none of these betray thee, if thou'rt Wise;  
 Let not their songs, nor sighs, thy Soul Entice,  
 But if thou wou'd be happy in thy Choice,  
 Above 'em all, a Gentleman prefer;  
 One free from Bus'ness, undisturb'd with Care;  
 Yet in the Publick Good (without Vile ends)  
 To serve his Country, and his Countries Friends:  
 Travel his Understanding shou'd improve;  
 For as it helps his Knowledge, 'twould his Love.  
 As to his Person, 'tis not to advise:  
 All Women see not with the self-same Eyes.  
 In that you might your own Opinion use,  
 Your Heart wou'd teach you; but were I to chuse  
 He should not be Effeminate or Proud,  
 (I hate the Man that is by Pride subdu'd)  
 In us I Grant a little Pride may be,  
 Much less a Crime (and may with Sense agree )  
 A Gift alone for our own Sex design'd,  
 To awe the loose Opinions of Mankind;

Wh

Who quickly else more Insolent wou'd grow :  
 'Tis Vertue's Guard, and Aids our Beauties too.

A Gay Appearance thou'd not make me err ;  
 I wou'd the Beauties of the Mind prefer.  
 Among the Few, I'd have a Man of Sense,  
 Endu'd with Modesty and Temperance ;  
 Not with a great, and yet a good Estate ;  
 Not too much Learning, nor Illiterate,  
 And yet he thou'd (avoiding each extream)  
 Know more of Man, than Man thou'd know of him  
 Be Gen'rous and Well-bred, but not Profuse ;  
 Not giv'n to Flattery, nor to take th' Abuse :  
 Gentile his Carriage, and his Humour such,  
 Shou'd speake him Sociable, but not Debauch.  
 A Lover of his Country, and a Friend to Wit,  
 Read *Poetry* he thou'd, but thou'd not write ;  
 His Temper Lively, not to *Wildness* bent,  
 His Talk Diverting, and yet Innocent ;  
 Not Unreserv'd, nor yet too Nicely Wise,  
 Apter to Bear, than Offer Injuries ;  
 Courage enough his Honour to defend,  
 Constant in Love, and Faithful to his Friend.

This is the Man I'd to my Heart prefer ;  
 Such Men, *Melissa*, well deserves our Care ;  
 You'll say they're scarce, & I must grant they are.

Yet I resolve by such a Man, or none,  
(Unless by Love betray'd) I will be won.

But were I Woo'd by the *Embellish'd Youth*;  
His Soul susceptible of Love and Truth :  
By easie steps he shou'd attain my Heart,  
By all the proofs of Breeding, Wit, and Art.  
Then like some Town, by *War-like Numbers* sought  
That long against its Enemies has fought,  
And oft with Courage brav'd the *shining Field*,  
Yet in the end by Want or Force compell'd,  
It does with Honour to the *Conquerer* Yield.

So to my Lover I'd my Heart resign,  
The Conquest his, the Glory shou'd be mine.  
With mutual Love my Nuptials shou'd be blest,  
Then to my Arms I'd call the *Welcome Guest*,  
And Celebrate with Joy great *Hymen's Feast*.

Marriage is Bondage ; but where *Cupid* Reigns  
The Yoke is easie ; Glorious are the Chains ;  
His Fetters please, nor will we to be Free,  
But Glory in the Loss of Liberty :

And yet but half of our Thanks we owe the Boy,  
He gives us Love, 'tis *Hymen* gives us Joy ;  
Well might the Poets sign those Gods a-kin,  
For we are only Happy where they join.

As



As when *Aurora* does the Bridal Morn;  
 With an uncommon Gaity Adorn,  
 From Its Illustrious Pride, with ease we may,  
 Foretell the Brightness of the coming Day:  
 So when true Love the Sacred Tye precedes,  
 Secure of happiness that couple weds;  
 No threat'ning storms do e'er Molest their Joy,  
 Nor Anctious Quarels do their Peace destroy;  
 Their days slide on in the securest ease,  
 And Circle in Eternal Rounds of Bliss.

Blest in my wish thus far, my next should be,  
 (For I *Melissa*, wou'd live far and free,  
 From the vile Tumults of this viler Town)  
 To have some little Cottage of my Own;  
 No spacious but a pleasant *Country* Seat,  
 Where the Gay spring shou'd smile on our  
 (Retreat;  
 Delightful Gardens should the Structure bound,  
 All *Love* within, and *Innocence* around;  
 Adorn'd with Fruit-Trees curious to the Eye,  
 With streaming Fountains, & a River Nigh,  
 Where low-grown Willows do recline th'r Head  
 And o'er its fall their Meeting Branches spread,  
 As

As tho' thy were by careful Nature hung,  
 To listen and regard its Murmuring Song,  
 Whose Silver current as it glides along;  
 Does wash the Bank of some delightful Grove,  
 Fragrant beneath, and sheaded all above;  
 Where the fresh Seasons breathe their vital Air,  
 And pritty Birds with untought Songs repair,  
 Where spreading Pines, & taller Poplars grow,  
 Young Elms that do a pleasing prospect shew.  
 Where Bow'rs of Yew, and twisted Hazles stand,  
 With cluster'd Filberts to invite the Hand;  
 A Place by Nature fram'd to feast the Mind,  
 By Art for solitude and Love design'd;  
 Where we would walk, and waſt our idle Hours  
 Gather the lucious Fruits & various Flowers,  
 Crop their ſtalks the Columbine and Roſe,  
 And from its Branch, the juicy Peach unloſe,  
 And ev'ry Sweet of Nature ſhould itſelf diſcloſe.

So the firſt Pair, of Innocence poſſeſt,  
 Were in their Native *Eden* truly Bleſt;  
 At large they rang'd o'er all the flow'ry Land,  
 And pluck'd their Food from Nature's liberal hand  
 Tripp'd o'er the Soil, and to the Fountains ran,  
 The Happy Woman *She*, and *He* the happy Man.

Next

Next in my Family I'd employ my care,  
 My attendance few, but honest and sincere;  
 I wou'd not have our happier Delights,  
 Destroy'd by Gaming Days, or Drinking Nights.  
 Nor yet look she upon those Friends he brought,  
 I wou'd seem pleasant, tho' I lik'd them not:  
 Courteous to all, and Liberal to the Poor,  
 They still shou'd chant their blessings at my Door  
 From whence dissatisfi'd they shou'd not go,  
 Lest Heaven shou'd retrench its Bounty too;  
 No Jars among my Servants shou'd be found,  
 But Chains of lasting Peace shou'd still run round.

Thus we'd the Innocence of Life enjoy,  
 For Love's a Beauty which does seldom cloy.  
 As Peaceful Monarchs do their Kingdoms Sway,  
 He shou'd my Heart, and I'd in Love obey;  
 No Change of Fortune shou'd prevent our flame,  
 But with the Good or Bad, be still the same.

FINIS.

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